

## ***In the Midst of Affliction***

Psalm 34

*[This is a long psalm, so as usual with the longer psalms, rather than including the entirety of it here, I encourage you to read it before continuing on with this devotion.]*

This is a psalm of confidence. Not of confidence because of a trouble free life, but confidence *in the midst* of the troubles of this life. When David wrote this psalm, he was in danger. He speaks of the poor man and all his troubles; of those who cry out to the Lord, the brokenhearted, the crushed in spirit, those who have many afflictions. In fact, he says, ***many are the afflictions of the righteous***. It is a very realistic picture of life. Life in a sinful and sin-filled world. The sin with which we bring troubles upon ourselves, and the sins of others which bring trouble upon us. We need help, and we have it.

For the Lord sees and knows all our troubles. In the psalm we hear words like ***delivered, saved, and refuge***. Blessed is not the one who has no trouble, but the one who in the midst of trouble takes refuge in the Lord. For the Lord will provide. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him. What a comforting picture that is! No sneak attacks, no coming up behind you with the angel of the Lord encamped around you.

But there is one verse in this psalm that really focuses us on the source of our help, verse 20: ***He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken***. This is a verse, we learn from the New Testament, about Jesus. The legs of the criminals crucified with Him were broken, but not Jesus' legs - He was already dead when the soldiers came to Him. But with Jesus on the cross, we see just how near the Lord is to the afflicted - He came and *joined us* in our affliction! He *became* the poor man who cried out to the Lord, and indeed, the Lord ***saved him out of all his troubles***. But how? Not by rescuing Him *from* the cross, but by rescuing Him *through* the cross. By His resurrection from the dead.

And so it will be for you and me. We will have afflictions and troubles in this life. Our bones may be broken. We may be crushed. But the Lord will not leave us, even in the grave. Even there He will keep us until our own resurrection, when we will rise and finally be delivered from all evil. On that day, how the psalmist began will be true for us: ***I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.***

Yet even now we do so as well. For we know His promises, that they are true and sure. And so we have confidence, just as David did, even in the midst of trouble, even when death draws near. The Lord is on our side. The Lord is with us. Yes, truly ***blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him.***

*Lord God, we live in the midst of many struggles and afflictions - some of them our own fault, some not. Thank You for Your great and precious promises to us. Thank You for Your forgiveness for us. And thank You for Your assurance that we are not alone in any affliction, but that You are with us! And more than with us, You have come to protect us, save us, and deliver us. Help us to live in this confidence, to fear You and not anything in this world and life, and to look forward to the day when all sin and trouble will be swallowed up, and there will be for us only life in You. Enable us to bless You at all times, that we be Your blessing to others in their afflictions. Amen.*